

LONGMONT FIRE DEPARTMENT

FIRE PREVENTION/SUPPORT SERVICES

225 KIMBARK STREET
LONGMONT, CO 80501-5912
303-651-8437



Barbecues, Smokers and Open Flame Cooking Devices at Apartment Buildings and Condominiums

NOTE: The Fire Code identifies barbecues, smokers, charcoal grills and other similar cooking devices as - **Open-flame Cooking Devices**.

Propane or LP-gas Cooking Devices

Propane cooking devices are not allowed on balconies or within 10 feet of combustible construction, exception for gas containers that are not greater than 2 ½ pound in capacity--A 2 ½ pound propane container is the smaller, typically green "Coleman" type cylinder (16 oz.). There are a number of grills manufactured that accept this type of container.

The reason for this provision in the code is due to the inherent nature of propane. Propane is heavier than air, tends to linger in a vapor cloud and does not diffuse easily. When propane is released, it flows and settles much like water to the lowest point. A propane leak occurring on a balcony may migrate into the apartment through an open door, or "flow" off the balcony into the open window of a lower unit. Any open flame the gas encounters may explosively ignite the cloud of propane.

Charcoal Cooking Devices

Charcoal cooking devices are not allowed on combustible balconies or within 10 feet of combustible construction, exception when buildings, balconies and decks are protected by an automatic fire sprinkler system.

Sensible reminders for any charcoal cooking -- Charcoal must never be used in an enclosed area, the fumes can be deadly. Flammable liquids like gasoline must never be used to start a charcoal fire. Use only products labeled for use as charcoal starting fluid. Never apply lighter fluid to an active fire. When done with charcoal cooking, replace the cover on the cooking device and close all air vents. Dispose of cold ashes into a noncombustible receptacle.

Electric Cooking Devices

Outdoor electric cooking devices may be operated on balconies or patios provided the cooking device is directly connected to an outside approved type electrical outlet and used per manufacturer's instructions.

Natural Gas Cooking Devices

Natural gas cooking devices are allowed on balconies and patios provided the gas fired cooking device is permanently connected, complying with the manufacturer's installation instructions and the Mechanical Code.

Exit Ways

Outdoor cooking devices cannot be located where they will block exit ways; including balconies, porches, patios or walkways.

Enforcement Responsibility

It is ultimately the property owner's responsibility to ensure compliance for most regulatory issues, including open-flame cooking devices.

The Fire Department frequently works with Homeowners' Associations (HOA's) and property management to heighten awareness of life safety items, including the use of open-flame cooking devices. Ideally, occupants take responsibility for and abide by lease agreements and management policies, which are typically driven by a combination of insurance, fire code, legal and proprietary requirements. Pertaining to the adopted 2012 edition of the International Fire Code, in part, Section 109.2 declares, "Correction and abatement of violations of this code shall be the responsibility of the *owner*."

Please contact the Fire Prevention Office at 303-651-8437 with questions or for clarification of these regulations or other fire code issues.

